

The Old Paths

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After The “Amen” Is Said ...

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I am sure we are familiar with the saying, “They left the building just as soon as the ‘amen’ was said.” This is just an exaggerated way of saying that a person left worship (which is usually concluded with a prayer) as soon as they could without staying and visiting with others afterward.

This little saying, however, got me to thinking about our responses to private and public prayers. Put simply, what do you (I) do after the “amen” is said? In other words, after we have prayed, what do we do next? In order to develop our thoughts, let us begin by dissecting the content of most prayers offered today and then make some applications.

The Content Of Our Prayers

As we begin, let me hasten to say that I recognize there are specific prayers that are offered for specific occasions. However, for the purpose of this article, we will be speaking in broad terms in order to emphasize a point. Generally speaking, we find the content of most public and private prayers to be similar. Generally, there is something said concerning God and His majesty, love and mercy, etc. (Matt. 6:9; Acts 4:24-25; Dan. 9:4) There is praise offered to God’s love and sacrifice in sending His Son to die on the cross. (Jn. 3:16; Rom. 5:8). Too, most prayers include a peti-

tion to heal those who are ill physically (Jas. 5:15a). This is right, proper, and Scriptural. There may also be petitions for those traveling as well as for those ill spiritually. During our prayers, we often pray for the spreading of the gospel in our local area and world-wide (I Thess. 3:1). Men will petition God for His guidance and providential hand (I Cor. 10:13; II Tim. 4:17-18). In many prayers, asking God’s help for our country and her leaders will be included (I Tim. 2:1-3). Again, I am speaking in broad terms, so in addition to these, other points may be included in an individual’s prayer. However, this is enough to make our point.

These Prayers Are Scriptural.

My mention of prayers in this broad sense is not to be critical. Certainly, such prayers are Scriptural, and in the case of public prayers, brethren are leading the congregation in a prayer to God for which we can all say, “Amen.” However, is this the end of the matter? Do we simply offer prayers to God and then stand back to watch God do whatever it is that He is going to do? Are we put here on earth just to give God our “wish list” like He is some kind of “genie”? What do we do after the “amen” is said? This, my friend, is where the rubber meets the road!

Action Is Needed After The “Amen” Is Said!

There is an old saying which

goes like this: “Pray as though everything depended upon God. Work as though everything depended upon you.” After the “amen” is said, are we active in our spiritual work? If not, why not? We need to understand that offering prayers for self and others is a valuable thing, but it is only part of our work before God as Christians.

For example, after we pray for the sick, we need to be active in doing what we can to help the sick in their time of need. Jesus commended folks who were “doers” (Matt. 7:21-23)! In connection with this, do we remember Christ’s commendation to those who visited (action!) Him when He was “sick” (Matt. 25:36)?

Again, after we pray for those who are ill spiritually, what are we doing to then take the opportunity to see to it that they do not die in their sins? Yes, let us pray for their softened heart and for God’s longsuffering (II Pet. 3:9, 15), but we ourselves need to be active in trying to win them back! This is the purpose and point of such passages as Galatians 6:1 and James 5:19-20. After the “amen” is said, are we living these passages?

After praying for the spread of the gospel, are we then active in taking the gospel to our friends and family? Are we active in inviting people to our worship services or inviting them to a Bible study in our home (II Tim. 2:2)? How about being the person instrumental in getting the preacher and sinner together, as Andrew and Philip did (Jn. 1:40-42, 45)? We can also be active in getting Bible material in the hands of those that need it. Parents, our work of teaching does not end with prayers. Rather, we need to be active in making sure our children know the truth that we know. God expected such work from parents in the Old Testament (Deut. 6:7-9), and ex-

pects the same from parents today (Eph. 6:4; Titus 2:3-5; etc.). Yes, our work can take many forms, but the point is we need to be active after praying!

One passage that best sums up our actions after the “amen” is said is James 2:14-26. James reminds us that being a Christian is more than merely saying the words. We must be active in our deeds! Often, we look to James 2 as a passage which shows our denominational friends that we are not saved by “faith only” because faith without works is dead. This is true and ought to be preached from the mountaintops (v. 17, 20, 24, 26). At the same time, let us remember that James was not writing a letter to denominational people. He was writing to Christians! Christians need to remember that “*faith without works is dead*”! Therefore, while we need to be praying for others, after the “amen” is said, let’s get to WORK!! (I Jn. 3:18)

Some Things Only God Can Do.

This study might cause some to reflect on prayer and realize that there are some things only God can do, i.e., forgive us of sins. Yes, when Christians repent and ask God for forgiveness of sins in prayer, John, by inspiration, has promised, “*If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness*” (I Jn. 1:9; See also: Acts 8:22).

In this situation, some may ask how we can be “active” after the “amen” is said when God has promised to forgive Christians when we repent and pray? One thing we can do after we have repented and asked God to forgive us, is to then be active in resolving to not fall for those same temptations anymore. The Bible says we

must resist the devil (Jas. 4:7), and we do this by not yielding to his temptations (Jas. 1:14-15). God has made sure we have a way to escape temptation (I Cor. 10:13). Therefore, let us be active in looking for this escape! These are the kinds of things we can do after having asked for God’s forgiveness and after the “amen” is said!

Another thing God does is extend mercy and patience to man for another day (I Pet. 3:9, 15). Man cannot add days to his life or anything of the sort. What we can do, however, is be active in making the most of the time we have (Heb. 3:15)! We can glorify God in our bodies (I Cor. 6:20). We can learn “*to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom*” (Ps. 90:12). We can take advantage of the day we have and not boast of tomorrow (Prov. 27:1), thinking we have more time “in the future.”

Conclusion

Let us pray to God for our needs and wants, for help for others, and for the well-being of our country, brethren, family, and self. Then, let us be active in the work the Lord has given us to do! (Rev. 22:14; Matt. 7:21; Acts 10:34-35) Friend, what are you doing after the “amen” is said??

Thoughts Concerning Preaching

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Quit labeling PREACHING - NEGATIVE or POSITIVE. The inspired word of God is for DOCTRINE, for REPROOF, for CORRECTION, for INSTRUCTION in righteousness (2 Tim. 3:16). Paul said, “*PREACH THE WORD; be instant in season, out of season; REPROVE, REBUKE, EXHORT with all longsuffering and doctrine*” (2 Tim. 4:2). This means PREACH AGAINST all kinds of ERROR and SIN. Accept the WHOLE TRUTH (Acts 20:27) and reject all FALSE DOCTRINE.

Editor’s Note:

I do not know the brother who wrote this, but I do appreciate his straightforward and direct approach in this teaching. He makes a great point about the mistakes men make in labeling preaching as “positive” or “negative.” When one preaches the gospel in such a way as it is aimed at men’s heart and moves them to repent, then this is not a “negative” thing. Let error be defeated, and let God’s truth be magnified on earth (Jn. 17:17; Eph. 5:11; II Cor. 10:3-5)! Let us be willing to listen and obey!

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